LEISURE: A KEY TO COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

Presented to: Services for Disabled Persons Branch

Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services

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Dear Colleague:

We are pleased to release "Leisure: A Key to Community Integration", concerning persons with disabilities, which as been completed by Burt Perrin Associates, Consultant to the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Ontario is committed to encouraging independence and self-direction for all citizens. The availability and accessibility of integrated recreation and leisure programs is one critical component which will enable persons with disabilities to more fully participate in their communities.

It is anticipated that this report will be of particular interest to persons with disabilities, service providers in the recreation and social service sector, as well as relevant provincial organizations. We trust that it will stimulate readers to consider the many issues related to enhancing the involvement of persons with disabilities in community leisure and recreation activities.

An Interministerial Committee, chaired by a representative of the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, is being formed to consider and respond to the recommendations in this report. To assist this committee in its deliberations, readers are invited to send comments to:

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We invite your thoughtful review.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

How important is leisure for meaningful community living? Is there a need for leisure services for adults with disabilities living in the community? If so, how should these be provided, and by whom?

The purpose of this study was to document the need and context for leisure for persons with disabilities, and to present a plan for action. The report presents a proposed vision for the future of leisure for persons with disabilities, as well as what is needed in order to turn this vision into a reality.

The report identifies primary roles and responsibilities regarding leisure services for persons with disabilities - for the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation (MTR) and its community clients, and for the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS). It also identifies some initial steps for MCSS to take in order to move toward the recommended vision.

Meaning and Importance of Leisure

Leisure involves the unstructured as well as structured use of free time. Thus leisure involves friendships and relationships as well as the use of formal recreation programs and facilities. Leisure involves spontaneous activity, alone or with others, as well as participation in planned or organized programs. Leisure complements rather than replaces work for adults. Leisure is voluntary activity, based upon informed choice by an individual from a range of options. And leisure is fun.

Leisure constitutes an integral part of community integration. Socialization and social interaction are major components - and byproducts - of leisure activity. Leisure is a critical component of quality of life, and is linked to health status. However, leisure is often viewed very narrowly, as "just fun and games", and the central role it plays in independent community living is not always fully recognized. As a result, leisure is given lower priority than it deserves.

The Current Situation

According to Statistics Canada, 16 percent of adults in Ontario are disabled. However, all indications are that most adults with disabilities have limited involvement in any form of leisure activity, structured or unstructured.

The lives of most disabled people can best be described as isolated. They tend to be "hidden away", with few friends or

meaningful relationships and limited community contacts. While they may be nominally living in the community, in reality their lives involve little community or social integration.

Why is this? The text discusses a number of barriers to participation in leisure which can be grouped as follows:

- Lack of income,
- Lack of transportation,
- Inaccessibility of leisure opportunities and services,
- Personal competencies and barriers,
- Lack of knowledge and information,
- Lack of necessary support services,
- Limited participation of persons with disabilities in the planning and implementation of recreation services,
- Segregated programs and services.

It is noteworthy that most of these barriers are systemic in nature, rather than a direct function of the disability itself.

In general, the recreation field has been lagging behind the general societal movement towards integration in other aspects of community life. As the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Committee indicated, the recreation community views the availability of recreation for persons with disabilities as a low priority rather than as a basic right. As a result, few recreation services are provided at the municipal level for persons with disabilities, and those which are tend to be segregated programs. Amateur sport is almost totally segregated. While leisure services by disability organizations vary, these most frequently consist of special programs and activities for their clients, which by definition are segregated.

However, we appear to be entering a transitional phase, with increasing awareness of the importance of leisure and the need to facilitate participation of people with disabilities in regular community leisure-time activities. A number of disability organizations, for example Mississauga Community Living, are starting to assist their clients in using regular leisure services in the community.

Similarly, there is a growing sense of responsibility within the recreation community about the need for approaches to recreation integration for persons with disabilities.

Examples of innovative approaches to recreation integration can be found in a number of communities. The Thunder Bay Parks and Recreation Department's approach to supporting adults with disabilities in regular recreation programs is particularly noteworthy.

Thus now may be an opportune time to move towards greater community integration in recreation and leisure.

A Vision of Leisure for Persons with Disabilities

Our vision for the future of leisure for persons with disabilities is really very simple:

> *Leisure for people with disabilities should be on the same basis as for anyone else. This means being able to make informed choices about both structured and non-structured leisure activities and having supports as necessary in order to participate in regular community leisure and recreational programs and activities.*

The two most important implications of this vision - and of this report - are that:

- The mainstream recreation sector - represented by the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation and municipal recreation - should assume primary responsibility for planning and addressing the leisure needs of all residents, even if they happen to have a disability, and should welcome persons with disabilities into regular recreation programs, so that the proportion of disabled adults served in these programs approximates their representation in the community;

- Flexible and portable support services should be made available to permit participation in community living, including recreation and leisure, with the Ministry of Community and Social Services taking primary responsibility.

Implications and Recommendations for Roles, Policy and Program Approaches

What needs to be done to help turn the proposed vision of leisure for persons with disabilities into a reality?

This text discusses a number of recommendations which can be summarized as follows:

Development of a Policy Statement

- The Ministry of Community and Social Services should develop a policy statement about leisure for persons with disabilities which should: acknowledge the importance of leisure and its role in community integration, set out the primary roles and responsibilities for the social services and recreation communities, and identify both indirect/facilitative as well as direct steps which MCSS should take to enhance the leisure lifestyles of persons with disabilities in Ontario.

Primary Roles and Responsibilities

- The recreation sector has a mandate for the provision of recreation to all persons in Ontario, including primary responsibility for persons with disabilities. It should acknowledge its role and responsibility to include persons with disabilities within its programs and services, and make a commitment to recognizing and to overcoming systemic barriers. The Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, as lead ministry for recreation, should develop a strategic action plan to assist the recreation community in taking necessary action in this regard.

- The primary role in leisure for the Ministry of Community and Social Services should be indirect. Rather than directly operating recreation, its primary role should be to provide support services as needed to ensure that persons with disabilities can participate in unstructured and structured recreation activities.

Implications for Other Policies, Programs and Approaches

- Employment, rather than leisure, should be viewed as the primary activity of adults, including adults with disabilities. Emphasis should be placed on assisting persons in employment, for example via supported employment, rather than in leisure or non-vocational alternatives.

- Non-vocational day programs, such as developmental day centres and centre-based life skills programs, should be phased out and transformed into programs providing either supported employment or support for participation in leisure in regular community settings.

- Income maintenance programs should take into account expenses required for an acceptable level of leisure participation when establishing benefit levels.

- MCSS also has significant roles in enhancing leisure for persons with disabilities via: liaison and co-ordination with the recreation community at both the corporate and community levels; supporting unstructured leisure; and

facilitating use of community recreation for present institutional residents as well as for those returning to the community, redefining the role of institutional recreationists, and establishing liaison between recreationists in institutional and community settings.

- Training should be provided to both recreation providers and to support workers. Both MTR and MCSS, as well as the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, have responsibilities in this area.

- MTR, possibly in co-operation with MCSS, should establish a grants program to assist municipalities in including persons with disabilities in their recreation programs and services.

- Disability agencies should act as advocates, connectors and supporters, rather than as direct providers of recreation services and programs.

The report also discusses the merits of drop-in programs, volunteering as a form of leisure activity, action to change public attitudes, and viewing the leisure needs of persons with disabilities within the context of other disadvantaged groups.

Strategies for MCSS to Move Towards Desired Vision

What is needed to get started? The report indicates some initial steps for MCSS to take in order to move toward the recommended vision. At least some action on all these steps should take place within the first year; thus these steps can be viewed as a recommended first year action plan.

Development of a Strategic Plan

MCSS should develop its own strategic plan for acting upon the implications of this report.

Review MCSS Programs and Policies with Implications for Leisure

While MCSS should not play the lead role in the provision of leisure services, there are a number of areas, such as the provision of support services, in which MCSS has critical roles to play.

Joint Planning with MTR

MCSS should engage in discussions with MTR, on a bilateral basis, about the need for action on MTR's part and how MCSS can assist.

Other Ministries

Interministry forums, including existing committees on recreation and on the disabled, should be used to discuss what other ministries, in addition to MCSS and MTR, can do to facilitate recreation integration.

Action at the Community Level

Both MCSS and MTR have independently identified the local community as the focus for planning and delivering services. To stimulate local activity, MCSS Operations staff should establish contact with MTR field staff, and jointly bring together municipal recreation and other key recreation providers with consumers and disability organizations.

Meeting in Thunder Bay

Some of the most innovative approaches to recreation integration have been undertaken in Thunder Bay. We suggest convening a meeting in Thunder Bay in order to discuss some practical means of moving toward recreation integration across the province, based upon consideration of this report as well as the Thunder Bay experience.

Legal Requirements

The Ontario Government's Community Recreation Policy Statement indicates that: "Recreation services should comply with the intent and spirit of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and human rights legislation." We suggest that MCSS should carry out or commission a review of the legal implications of the Charter and the Ontario Human Rights Code for the right of access of persons with disabilities to public facilities and the obligations of service providers to make their services accessible.

Information Sharing

MCSS should explore means of assisting the recreation and the disability communities in learning more about each other and about leisure and disability, and in sharing information about steps which communities have taken to advance recreation integration.

Training

A long-term plan for training should be created, identifying training needs and priorities and means of delivery.

Conclusion

This report has pointed out the importance of leisure to community integration for persons with disabilities, and has set out a vision for the future.

There are many barriers to leisure participation of persons with disabilities. At present, few community recreation programs are open at all to persons with disabilities; those which are available tend to be segregated programs.

Yet there are indications that the tide may be turning. There is increasing recognition - among consumers, the general public and recreationists - of the right of <u>all</u> persons, including persons with disabilities, to be part of the community. An increasing number of recreation organizations are starting to acknowledge their responsibility and are beginning to include persons with disabilities within their programs.

Thus the time is opportune for more concerted action to make recreation integration - and the full participation of all persons with disabilities in the regular leisure life of the community - a reality.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Background and Purpose of Study

How important is leisure for meaningful community living? Is there a need for leisure services for adults with disabilities living in the community? If so, how should these be provided, and by whom?

There has been a gradual trend in our society towards independent living in the community for persons with disabilities. Consumers are demanding the right to participate, on the same basis as others, in all aspects of community life, along with the necessary support and assistance to make this possible. Service providers, as well as the community at large, are beginning to recognize the rights - and abilities - of persons with disabilities.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) supports the movement towards independent community living. For example, in 1974, the government made a major commitment to provide community living alternatives for developmentally handicapped people. Since that time, there has been a large increase in the availability of a range of community services, and a corresponding decrease in the numbers of persons living in institutional settings.

More recently, the Multi-Year Plan, described in Challenges and Opportunities, lays out a strategy for the planned phase-out of institutional placement of people with developmental handicaps, nd for the strengthening of community services, so that all developmentally handicapped people receive the support they require in their home communities. The plan calls for the introduction of new program models, such as supported independent living and supported employment.

The Ministry, as indicated in its Corporate Plan, also is committed to the provision of community support services to persons with physical disabilities, to make possible their full participation in society.

But to date, there has been little attention to leisure. How does participation in leisure relate to independent living and community involvement? How adequate are existing services? How can these be strengthened? What is the appropriate role for the recreation sector, including the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation (MTR) and municipal recreation departments in providing recreation services to people with disabilities? What should the Ministry of Community and Social Services do to facilitate participation in leisure?

To be sure, Challenges and Opportunities indicates that MCSS "wants to ensure a wide range of non-vocational programs for people who want more leisure-based options." It indicates that MCSS will be supporting:

- "Development of creative programs to meet the recreational needs of developmentally handicapped people;
- Involvement and leadership of the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation and leisure/ recreation agencies in appropriate program development."

However, up until now no action has been taken toward identifying how this commitment can be fulfilled.

Thus this study had two major objectives:

- To document the need and context for leisure for persons with disabilities, including consideration of:
  - the meaning and importance of leisure;
  - the current situation, barriers and opportunities;
  - the recreation context and environment;
- To present a plan for action, including:
  - a proposed vision;
  - implications and recommendations for roles, policy and program approaches;
  - strategies for getting started.

The study takes into consideration all adults with disabilities, irrespective of the type or severity of disability.

2. Approach and Methodology

This study used the following means of information gathering:

Interviews. Interviews were carried out with: representatives of disability organizations, municipal recreation managers and practitioners and other specialists in the recreation area, consumers and parents, government staff and managers, and with other key informants. Appendix 1 lists the persons whom we interviewed during the conduct of this study.

Literature search. A selective literature review of published and unpublished documents, was carried out. The purpose of this review was to identify: trends and developments in the recreation/leisure field as well as in the provision of leisure services to persons with disabilities,

models used by service agencies as well as by recreation programs for the provision of leisure services, as well as other background information. Appendix 2 lists the documents we consulted.

Experience of members of the consulting team. We were able to draw upon the experience and familiarity of the various members of the consulting team with the recreation area, disability, and recreation integration.

II. THE MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF LEISURE

1. What is Leisure?

Leisure can be described as: "having leisure choices and using a variety of community resources, whether they be walking in the park, taking evening courses, or going out with friends."[1] The Government of Ontario's Community Recreation Policy Statement defines recreation as: "All those things a person or group chooses to do in order to make leisure time more interesting, more enjoyable and more satisfying."

Although a full discussion of the concept and meaning of leisure is beyond the scope of this paper, three dimensions of leisure are particularly noteworthy:

- Structured vs. unstructured activity,
- Free choice from a range of options,
- Fun.

A. Structured vs. Unstructured Activity

Structured leisure involves participation in organized activities or events. Examples of structured activities include: regularly scheduled recreation programs, organized athletics, organized trips, as well as other regularly scheduled activities. These activities are generally offered in a teaching or supervised setting at designated times, by private, non-profit, and public sector organizations, and may be offered at no cost or for a fee. An individual may participate in structured leisure activities on a regular or an ad hoc basis. Most recreation programs fit into this category.

Unstructured leisure is informal activity that occurs during an individual's "free" time. Unstructured leisure can cover a diverse range of activities, ranging from solitary undertakings (e.g. sewing, reading, strolling down the street) to those that occur in social settings (e.g. visiting or talking on the telephone with friends or relatives, going to a movie with others, participating informally in other community activities). Unstructured leisure activities involving others are generally grounded in established friendships and/or social contacts, and usually require an invitation of some form to participate in the group activity.

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[1] Hutchison and Lord, 1979; this and all other references cited in the text are listed in Appendix 2.

For both structured and unstructured leisure, a variety of related skills may be involved in participation. For example, participation in an aerobics class requires competencies in: finding out about the existence of aerobics classes and when and where they are offered, knowing how to register and to pay any necessary fees, purchasing and selecting suitable attire, getting to and from the class, knowing how to interact with other participants and with the instructor, as well as the technical skills involved in actual participation in the exercises.

B. Free Choice From A Range of Options

The Community Recreation Policy Statement indicates that:

> "The first and central element [in the definition of recreation] is that of choice which, in turn, implies the freedom to choose based on personal needs and interests. Freedom and choice are central to the recreation concept and their recognition and safeguarding, basic to any government involvement.
>
> The second element is that recreation activities can be pursued individually, as well as collectively. Again, the choice is a personal one and opportunities ought to be provided for both options."

Since no two individuals have the same recreational interests, the choice must be a personal one. In order to be able to make a free choice, an individual requires access to a range of options and opportunities such as:

- Use of public/non-profit and private recreation programs and services (e.g., community centres, arenas, classes, parks);
- Individual leisure time activities (e.g., reading, walking, hobbies, vacations);
- Family, friends (e.g., private telephone conversations, social gatherings);
- Peer group activities (e.g., clubs, self-help groups, interest groups, associations);
- Volunteer activities (e.g., hospitals, agencies, clubs);
- Participation in community events and activities (e.g., movies, fairs, galleries, museums, celebrations, etc.).

People participate in leisure activities indoors, outdoors, in their own homes or in designated meeting places, within their own neighbourhood or community as well as elsewhere when travelling, and in urban and rural settings.

While leisure can involve participation in planned activity, a basic component of leisure is being able to choose what one wishes to do spontaneously. Without this option, one is limited to organized activities, and free choice does not exist.

C. Fun

Leisure is what one chooses to do with one's discretionary, free time. If there is compulsion involved then it is not leisure. First and foremost, participation in leisure implies enjoyment and fun!

2. Why is Leisure Important?

Because leisure by definition involves fun, and because it is often interpreted very narrowly, it is often viewed as a frill. However, our research indicates that leisure is directly associated with three central aspects of lifestyle which form key objectives of MCSS, including:

- Quality of life,
- Health, and
- Community participation, integration and socialization.

A. Leisure and Quality of Life

There is no clear consensus on what constitutes "quality of life". However, no matter how it is conceptualized, leisure participation, including relationships, participation in community activities, memberships and associations are considered a central aspect of quality of life.

For example, the Community Recreation Policy Statement states that: "Recreation is a fundamental human need for persons of all ages and is essential to a person's physical and social well-being and to the overall quality of life." There is ample support for this statement in the leisure literature and in many of MTR's publications.

There is also evidence of the contribution of leisure to the quality of life specifically for persons with disabilities. For example, the Developmental Consulting Program of Queen's University, on behalf of MCSS, has been developing and testing assessment techniques which can be used in the

evaluation and monitoring of the quality of life of developmentally handicapped persons. Three of the twelve domains which they have identified relate in whole or in part to leisure. A majority of the indicators used to assess the quality of life of participants in the Pennsylvania Domiciliary Care Experiment concern relationships and other aspects of leisure.

Furthermore, persons with disabilities themselves point to the central importance of leisure to quality of life. A recent survey commissioned by The Office of Disabled Persons shows that leisure is more closely related to perceived satisfaction with life than almost any other variable explored in the study. The survey also asked about a number of factors such as access to transportation, the inability to obtain personal assistance, the accessibility/availability of community leisure resources, and self-consciousness of the disability. The results indicate that for all these variables, the greater the degree of disability, the less welcoming the leisure environment and the more difficulty people have in participating in the community.

As an Executive Director of an agency providing services to persons with disabilities told us: "Leisure is a means of enabling people to find friends. . . . Leisure is a part of life's meaning, a part of the whole; it is not a luxury."

B. Leisure and Health Status

Evidence from the health promotion and leisure literature suggests that participation in leisure activities for anyone (most of the research is on the general population) can be related to health status.

Some of the ways in which health and leisure activity are linked include:

Isolation. Social relationships are one of the best indicators of health status. For example, one of the best researched studies employing strong methodological controls which examined the impact of various factors over a nine-year period on health status (see Berkman and Syme, 1979) found that people who are isolated, i.e., lack social and community ties, are more than twice as likely to die at a younger age than are those with more extensive contacts. This association is independent of a number of other factors such as self-reported physical health status, socio-economic status, smoking and alcohol habits and obesity.

Physical Fitness. Participation in physical activity is strongly linked to health status. There is also evidence specifically documenting the importance of physical activity

among people with disabilities, as well as for all members of the general population.

Stress. Stress, in addition to being a health problem in its own right, is linked to a variety of health ailments. Leisure can be a source of respite and relaxation that can help minimize stress. In addition, stress tends to be highest among people with limited social contacts.

Mental Health. Leisure is a means of building competence, confidence and self-esteem through participation in group and in self-directed activity, and a means, at least in part, of achieving self-actualization and of fulfilling intrinsic needs. These and other factors mentioned above, such as loneliness and stress, are directly related to mental health and psychiatric problems.

C. Community Participation, Integration and Socialization

Socialization and social interaction are critical components and byproducts of leisure activity for all members of society. Participation in both structured and unstructured leisure and recreational activities in the community provide for natural opportunities to meet others.

Leisure relates to friendships in a variety of ways. Participation in recreation activities provides an opportunity to meet and participate together with other people who have similar interests, providing a natural way for friendships to develop. For example, people moving to a new community often use structured recreation as a way of meeting new friends.

Leisure is just as important for persons with disabilities as it is for anyone else. Leisure in regular community settings provides opportunities to interact with others in a natural way and to learn social skills and appropriate behaviours. Interaction could be with fellow participants in integrated recreation activities, as well as with the fellow citizens one might encounter on walks in parks or on city streets, at theatres, and at other settings.

People working with persons with disabilities are increasingly aware of leisure/recreation as an important vehicle for integration, that "the best things happen when people link up in a natural way". One person we interviewed, who is involved in employment training for persons with disabilities, pointed out that participation in leisure and recreation is the least threatening vehicle for integration and offers a good starting point to get people involved in the community. Another person pointed out that leisure is "a big part of life," providing "opportunities to develop friendships that support a person through life." Thus the social skills and confidence which can develop through

leisure participation can carry over into other aspects of a person's life.

In addition, contact with friends and family is leisure. Indeed, time spent with friends and family is a major way most non-disabled people use their leisure time.

Finally, participation in leisure in the community can help create a sense of community. Persons who are active in the community are more aware of their environment and are more involved with a broader, more diverse range of people. This in turn leads to more options for other forms of community participation.

Indeed, community integration involves more than just residence in a community setting. A person who may have a job and a place to live, but who is isolated, with minimal contact with others and with the community, cannot be considered to be leading an integrated lifestyle. Social integration is a critical component of community integration and of quality of life.

III. THE CURRENT SITUATION

The current situation in Ontario regarding leisure for adults with disabilities can be summarized as follows:

- There is limited participation in leisure activities of any form in the community, resulting in considerable isolation and a lack of social integration;
- There are a number of barriers which limit participation in community leisure;
- A transitional phase appears to be beginning, with increasing awareness of the importance of leisure and the need to facilitate participation in regular community leisure-time activities;
- While most existing recreation programs for persons with disabilities are segregated, this is starting to change, with some interesting models which assist people in using regular community recreation programs and settings.

Each of these points is discussed in more detail below.

1. Participation in Leisure Activities

According to Statistics Canada's Health and Activity Limitation Survey, carried out in 1986-87, 16 percent of adults (age 15 and over) in Ontario are disabled. Disability is directly related to age: while 6 percent of the population 15 to 34 years of age has a disability, this rises to 16 percent for those 35 to 64 years and to 47 percent for persons 65 years of age and over. Fourteen percent of the total population, including both adults and children, is disabled.

All indications are that persons with disabilities have limited involvement in any form of leisure activity, structured or unstructured. For example, the consumers we spoke with indicated that while they would like a more active and varied leisure life, they had few friends, limited contact with others, and participated in few community recreation activities. Most of their leisure time was spent in solitary pursuits.

Available data confirms this picture. For example, a Fitness Canada study found that less than 15% of disabled Canadians use any community facilities. Those fitness activities which are undertaken are usually done alone and in or around the home. The Office for Disabled Persons survey found a similar pattern, and that the more severe the disability, the less likely a person was to spend any leisure time with

others or in the community. It is clear that only a negligible number of the adult participants served by municipal and other community recreation programs and activities are disabled - far less than their 16 percent representation in the population at large.

The lives of most disabled people can best be described as isolated. They tend to be "hidden away", with few friends or meaningful relationships and limited community contacts. While they may be nominally living in the community, in reality their lives involve little community or social integration.

2. Barriers to Leisure Participation

Why is participation in leisure so restricted for persons with disabilities? Our research identified a number of barriers to participation which are discussed below.

A. Lack of Income

Virtually half (49%) of adults with disabilities in Ontario have an annual income of less than $10,000 a year. Most are unemployed.[2]

Thus it is hardly surprising that few persons with disabilities have any discretionary income which can be used for membership in fitness clubs or program fees which even most municipal and non-profit recreation programs charge. Little income is available to attend movies, sporting and other leisure events. As an MTR report, Serving Disadvantaged Women, noted: "Even 'free' programs may be inaccessible, where they involve buying equipment or paying for the use of facilities. Having to pay program fees all at once, rather than in installments, may be an additional barrier." The title of one section of this report was: "My clients couldn't even afford the headbands," a comment by a fitness programmer in response to "The Twenty Minute Workout".

In addition, poverty precludes participation in most unstructured leisure, particularly participation with others. Lack of income makes it difficult to get together with friends, to do things together with others, to exchange normal social pleasantries (e.g. to have guests at one's home and to provide refreshments) or to go places which may provide opportunities to meet others and possibly develop friend-

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[2] These as well as other statistics otherwise unidentified in this chapter are drawn from the Statistical Profile of Disabled Persons in Ontario, prepared by the Office for Disabled Persons, based upon analysis of data from the 1983-83 Canadian Health and Disability Survey.

ships. The housing of people living in poverty often may lack privacy and space, making it difficult or impossible for them to invite friends over. Even the use of public transportation, when it is available and a person is able to use it, is financially difficult for someone with extremely limited income.

Without adequate purchasing power, people cannot access a range of community resources and other services such as attendant care and private transportation which can accommodate and support their participation in community leisure activities.

Thus the effects of poverty compound other barriers facing most people with disabilities in participating in leisure activities.

B. Lack of Transportation

The lack of adequate transportation was identified time and time again as a major barrier to participation in both structured and unstructured leisure. Without transportation, visiting friends and participating in community activities, on either a planned or spontaneous basis, as well as participation in regular recreation events, is difficult or impossible.

In Ontario, 6 percent of adults with disabilities are unable to use any public transportation, and an additional 22 percent have difficulty in using public transportation due to their disability. In many localities, especially in rural areas, no public transportation of any type is available. While some communities have parallel transit services, these are unavailable for most people in Ontario who could benefit from such a service.

Even when special transportation can be arranged, it frequently requires pre-booking well in advance. One may have to plan one's recreation around transportation rather than the other way around. Much of leisure is, by definition, spontaneous. This can be impossible without access to flexible transportation. And access to the service is uncertain because leisure is viewed as a low priority.

C. Inaccessibility of Leisure Opportunities and Services

Many physical, social and attitudinal barriers limit access to participation in community settings for leisure, as well as in specific recreation facilities and programs.

For example, while there have been major improvements in recent years, not all city streets have graduated curb cuts, especially in rural areas, making the use of sidewalks difficult for wheelchair users. A wide range of settings for

leisure, including community halls and arenas, theatres, restaurants, and the like, are not physically accessible. While new recreation centres and a number of older ones are now accessible, many others still are not.

However, accessibility requires more than just a ramp into the front door of a building. For example, as a senior manager in recreation told us, "accessible" entrance to a building is of little use if its interior, as well as equipment needed to participate in the recreation programs which are offered, are not usable.

Furthermore, social accessibility is just as essential as physical accessibility. A welcoming atmosphere, whereby a person with a disability is accepted on the same basis as anyone else is needed. This is frequently lacking. For example, we were given many examples where persons with disabilities are stereotyped and automatically placed in the same activity as others with the same disability, with no consideration of individual interest, or else referred to a segregated program as a matter of course. Persons labelled as mentally handicapped told us about their experiences in being patronizingly looked down upon and treated as children, rather than as adults, when they attempted to participate in regular recreation programs.

Thus even many programs that consider themselves to be accessible are not really.

D. Personal Competencies and Barriers

It is noteworthy that most of the barriers discussed in this chapter are systemic. However, there are also personal barriers which can impede participation in recreation.

Many persons with disabilities are lacking, to some degree or other, in basic social skills. For some people, especially persons with developmental or psychiatric disabilities, this in part may be a function of the disability. But to a large extent, this is due to isolation from community life and from contact with other people, so that they have not had the same opportunities as non-disabled persons to build relationships with others and to acquire social competencies. And as Cormier et al. (1986) have indicated, "because of the isolation and segregation in their lives, few natural networks with friendship potential exist." People who have recently returned to the community after many years in an institutional setting (usually in a different geographical area) will have had little or no opportunity to learn and to apply appropriate social and personal skills; this is also true of other persons who may have lived in community settings, but with limited exposure to non-segregated settings.

Examples of skills which some individuals may lack include: knowing how to use a variety of community resources, how to interact with other people in varying circumstances, how to make and to keep friends, as well as a range of other lifeskills (e.g. getting about in the community and using public transport, using money, dressing and personal care). As well, people may have had limited opportunity to develop activity-specific leisure skills and related behaviours, e.g. how to dance or to play cards, and may need help in order to participate.

In addition, many people with disabilities experience poor self esteem and self confidence which can limit their ability to participate in leisure activities. Persons used to a world where most decisions about their lives are made by others, and where they have limited past opportunities to make their own decisions and to assert their independence, may appear to be limited in "motivation". Based upon their past experiences, they also may have low expectations for growth and development.

A major reason for participation in leisure activities by most non-disabled persons is to be with others. This is equally true for persons with disabilities. However, many are lonely and do not have friends that could go to a program with them; they may not be sure how to meet new friends or if they can. Also, participation in an integrated recreation program can be a major risk for people who have been segregated all their lives. Parents, who also may be concerned about their adult son or daughter participating in an integrated setting, still are a big part of the lives of many persons.

E. Lack of Knowledge and Information

Both persons with disabilities, as well as the general public and the recreation community, lack knowledge and information about each other - persons with disabilities about the availability of and how to access community leisure services; recreation providers and the public about disability.

Persons with disabilities frequently have little knowledge about what leisure opportunities are available in the community; even if they learn of these, they may not know what they need to do in order to participate. As discussed above, this is primarily due to their isolation from mainstream community life and from contact with other people, where this information is normally acquired. But this lack of information is also an indication that community recreation programs are not as effective as they could be in publicizing their programs and services. Indeed, many community recreation authorities are starting to recognize that many groups within the community, in addition to persons with disabilities, are not being reached through their current communications.

Furthermore, with little exposure to the vast array of potential leisure-time activities, informed choice can be impossible. For example, how can anyone decide if they would enjoy Tai Chi if they have no idea what it may be?

The recreation community also needs to know more about what it is like to live with a disability and the kinds of supports that are helpful. Most recreationists are unsure of how best to assist persons with disabilities in participating in their programs, and how their current practices may, however unintentionally, restrict access and participation. There is a need for awareness building, education, and staff training.

In addition, the general public needs more information about the abilities of persons with disabilities and their right to participate on an equal basis. Leisure, even more so than employment and other forms of social interaction, is typically voluntary (e.g. most people have no choice over their workmates, but are free to choose their friends and who they wish to associate with in their leisure time). Thus public attitudes are particularly important in facilitating the leisure participation of persons with disabilities in the community.

F. Lack of Necessary Support Services

There is ample evidence that the availability of support services can enable people, despite their handicap, to live in the community. For example, evidence from numerous supported employment programs indicate that any person, irrespective of degree of disability, is capable of working in regular job settings, given appropriate support.

Similarly, the availability of appropriate support services can assist persons in participating in both structured and unstructured leisure activities. For example, a support worker can help a person learn about available options for leisure, what recreation services are available in the community, and how to use them. If necessary, a support worker could intercede with the service provider. Support can assist a person in acquiring needed skills in order to participate, for example how to get to the program, how to dress, how to talk to others (i.e. basic "lifeskills"), as well as how to participate (e.g. what one does in an exercise class). Support can assist a person, if necessary, with various forms of unstructured leisure, including how to go about making and keeping friends.

In some cases, some assistance or support from the recreation leader may be all that a person requires in order to participate in a recreation program. However, people may be

reluctant to sign up for a program if they are unsure if this support will be available.

For many persons with physical disabilities, the major barrier they face is the lack of attendant care. As a recent report to MCSS indicated, there is a need for flexible and portable attendant care which is under the control of each individual. Existing attendant care services tend to be site based.

In order for an individual with personal support needs to participate in community based leisure activities, consistent availability of attendant care services that can go with the person is essential. As the previous chapter indicated, leisure involves choice and spontaneity. Without ready and predictable access to attendant care, a person is restricted from participation in ongoing leisure activities, as well as in spontaneous undertakings which may range from running out to the video store, window-shopping, or visiting with friends.

An important proviso about support services is that the need for support differs widely. Some individuals with challenging needs may need constant support. Others, e.g. people returning from institutional settings, may require considerable support initially which can later be reduced. Others may only require assistance with certain aspects of their lives or to get them started. Thus an essential component of any support services to assist in leisure participation is flexibility.

G. Limited Participation in Planning

Only rarely are persons with disabilities involved in the planning and implementation of recreation services. Involvement at this level can both act to reflect a recognition that persons with disabilities are valued consumers of service, and help make programs more appropriate. For example, as Hutchison (1984) has indicated:

> "When planning involves the disabled person there is typically a focus on barriers which need to be overcome in order to increase access to community resources. When planning is only done by professionals there is much more focus on the person's disability and problems rather than on the environment and the limitations it places on people who have disabilities."

H. Segregated Programs and Activities

The funding and existence of segregated leisure services impedes integrated participation in several ways, including:

- Reinforcing existing attitudes - among service providers of all types, the public, parents and caregivers, and persons with disabilities themselves, that persons with disabilities do not belong in regular leisure activities and that special (i.e. segregated) programs need to be developed for them;

- Promoting inappropriate programs - for example group activities, putting people together in the same activity irrespective of age or personal interest;

- Restricting personal choice - when only segregated activities are offered, a person with a disability has the choice of going along with the laid-on program, or else doing nothing (if this latter option is even available); guidance in how to seek out and use community opportunities is not offered;

- Misdirecting limited funding, within disability agencies as well as by mainstream recreation services, which otherwise could go towards facilitating integration and making the community more accessible.

3. Interest in Leisure and Current Activities and Services

The consumers and representatives of disability agencies with whom we spoke in the course of this study all indicated the importance of leisure to the quality of life for people with disabilities. For example, a number of people have independently said: "I'm glad you're looking at leisure. It's very important, but it's received almost no attention from anyone." However, few have made leisure a priority area up to now, as dealing with needs in basic areas such as housing, employment, income security and human rights has left little time, energy or resources for anything else. Leisure and recreation tend to be viewed in a very narrow context, and as a result there have been few attempts at a planned and co-ordinated approach to leisure.

Chapter IV discusses the attitudes of recreation practitioners and the availability and appropriateness of services and programs of mainstream recreation organizations for persons with disabilities.

Many self-help organizations offer informal drop-ins and/or provide space for people to come together to talk. Not all of what they do is oriented at self help and some of their activities may include leisure experiences, i.e. visiting with one another, relaxing together, going for walks, having dinner together, etc. This can represent leisure in its own right, as well as providing occasions for the development of friendships (albeit with others who have the same disability). However, few consumer groups have worked directly to

facilitate integration or lobby for access into regular community services.[3]

Participation in consumer groups can also enhance individual self-advocacy and empowerment. For example, the People First members we spoke with told us how some individuals would initially be very passive at meetings, and gradually develop confidence in participating more within the organization, and later with the community-at-large. This enhanced self confidence can enhance participation in leisure, as well as in other aspects of a person's life.

Leisure services by disability organizations vary. However, these most frequently consist of special programs and activities for their clients, which by definition are segregated. When community facilities are used, they typically involve groups of clients (e.g. a visit to a museum) or the use of a regular facility (e.g. a swimming pool) but when it is closed to the regular public.

However, this situation seems to be changing. Learnings from a decade of integration - in employment, education, residential and other settings - are raising awareness among service providers and the general public; people with disabilities and their advocates have higher expectations for themselves and the people they support, increasing demands for integration. People in human services are beginning to understand better what it takes to support someone in an integrated community setting, the role of leisure in community integration and the importance of facilitating relationships.

A number of voluntary organizations are also starting to assist their clients in using regular leisure services in the community. Two particularly interesting models are those used by Mississauga Community Living and by West Island Readaptation Centre in Montreal. These approaches are briefly summarized in Appendix 3.

Awareness of the importance of integrated leisure activity for adults with disabilities is increasing within the recreation community, and among service agencies and consumer groups. Initiatives to provide opportunities for their participation in the community in an integrated way are being taken by a few social service agencies and recreation departments.

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[3] HAGI, in Thunder Bay, which has co-operated with the municipal parks and recreation department (described in Chapter IV and in Appendix 4), is a notable exception. In addition, advocacy of consumers on behalf of accessible transportation and community facilities and other services has a direct impact on opportunities for leisure participation in the community.

We found keen interest in this study among the persons we interviewed. People were pleased that MCSS was exploring the area of leisure. We found strong support for the concept that regular community recreation agencies should be encouraged and assisted in providing leisure and recreation for persons with disabilities, in integrated settings, and that support as required should be made available so that people are able to participate in activities of their choice. We also heard some concerns about the nature of MCSS's involvement in leisure. These concerns are that:

- MCSS should not provide recreation services itself, but should encourage and facilitate existing generic services to recognize their mandate to provide integrated services;
- Funding should focus on integrated services and community development;
- The community should accept responsibility and develop needed leisure resources;
- MCSS should provide support services, including flexible, portable attendant care and supports for self-advocacy, as well as public education and staff training about integration.

4. Summary

Persons with disabilities at present by and large do not have rich leisure lives. Their lives involve considerable isolation, with little use of community leisure settings and little involvement with friends or with others. There are many barriers, mainly systemic but also personal, to participation in leisure activities on an integrated basis in the community.

However, awareness of the importance of leisure to community integration among consumers and disability organizations is increasing. While leisure services by disability agencies tend to consist of segregated programs and activities, a number of organizations are now starting to assist their clients in using regular community leisure services. We found strong support for the concept that regular community recreation agencies should include persons with disabilities within their regular programs.

IV. THE RECREATIONAL CONTEXT AND ENVIRONMENT

1. Major Players and Services

The Ministry of Tourism and Recreation (MTR) is the lead ministry for recreation. The Recreation Division, which consists of the Sports and Fitness Branch and the Recreation Branch, has primary responsibility for recreation. In addition, the Operations Division, which has recreation consultants in offices across the province, provides grants and consultation to local recreation providers.

MTR plays largely an indirect role in service provision. It views its role as supporting the efforts of others, at the community and at the provincial levels, primarily through funding and consultation assistance, but also through other means including the development and dissemination of resources and through a variety of voluntary and professional recreation leadership development activities. MTR sees itself as playing an advocacy and leadership role in the area of recreation, and in this regard monitors trends and issues in the field of recreation and provides support for research. As part of its lead ministry role, it is responsible for providing co-ordination for recreation at the provincial level. While MTR plays mainly a supporting rather than a controlling role, many community and provincial recreation organizations and service deliverers look to the Ministry for leadership, guidance and direction.

MTR provides financial assistance to a variety of provincial agencies, including the Parks and Recreation Federation of Ontario (PRFO), of which the major provincial recreation associations are members. Its resources and support are provided to a wide range of community based recreation service providers. The largest share of MTR's Recreation Division budget goes to the support of amateur sport, through grants to Provincial Sport Organizations, funding of Games at various levels, and through other program activities. In this manner, support to disabled sport is also provided, e.g. via Games for the Disabled and funding of sport associations for the disabled.

However, the primary client of MTR is the local municipality. The Community Recreation Policy Statement, approved by the Ontario Government in 1987, identifies the local municipality as the lead party in providing recreation to the people of Ontario. Municipal recreation departments, in addition to their role as direct service providers, are also being called upon to play a co-ordination role in their community. In this capacity, they are expected to address the needs of community residents for recreation by reaching out to other recreation providing agencies such as YM/YWCAs, community groups and private providers in order to stimulate joint

planning, information exchange, program evaluation and the co-ordinated development of resources. Presently some municipalities take on this broad co-ordination role, while others are still focusing primarily on direct service provision.

MTR's Recreation Branch assists in community recreation through consultation services and resources in a number of areas. One of its consultants has half-time responsibility for Recreation for Persons with a Disability. Through this portfolio, MTR provides grants and funding for integration (the Operations Division also can provide grants in this area). MTR also plays a role in training of recreation practitioners, the provision of training tools and resources, and building awareness of the need. No support for segregated opportunities is provided by this program.

Generally speaking, only a limited number of recreation services are presently available at the municipal level for adults with disabilities. While a mixture of integrated and segregated opportunities exist, the service system is predominately segregated. The continuum model of service provision dominates many recreation departments and reinforces segregation. The model is based upon the theory that people must be `ready' for integration and therefore should participate in segregated settings in preparation for integration.

Municipal recreation departments tend to operate on a supply and demand basis in the area of recreation integration. Opportunities for integrated programs are supplied only if the demand justifies their operation. This leads to a "Catch 22" situation. When opportunities for recreation integration are not central to the service provision by many local providers, people with disabilities do not expect to obtain services. When these residents do not demand services, the local providers deduce that there is no great need for services. In addition, many municipal services, especially in rural locations, tend to be primarily directed at young children and to have a focus on sports. This system is highly unlikely to be conducive to recreation integration.

There are 13 provincial recreation practitioner organizations, 18 regional associations, and several local networks across Ontario that bring together recreation people to learn and share experiences. These are linked via PRFO (Parks and Recreation Federation of Ontario), a provincial umbrella organization. The practitioners within the recreation profession learn about different approaches to service provision through networking and training sessions at workshops and conferences offered by these organizations. Generally, these associations are not greatly concerned about recreation for people with disabilities at the present time. However, in the past, when an issue has been raised by MTR and/or MCSS, such as in the case of child abuse prevention,

the recreation associations have played a key role in training and provision of resources with the support of key ministries. Thus the professional associations at the provincial, regional, and local level have a role to play when a shift in direction within the recreation field is required.

Many service clubs, voluntary associations and private non-profit organizations offer segregated opportunities for people with disabilities in Ontario. These opportunities are largely based on the 'charity model'. They may run segregated clubs or sponsor special events. In some instances, there are enormous amounts of capital dollars invested in programs, staff and facilities to provide segregated opportunities. For this reason, it may be difficult for these providers to justify a change to integration when the investments in segregation are so high.

Sport in particular is almost totally segregated, at all levels, with a separate infrastructure for disabled sport. At the higher levels of amateur sport, there are totally separate Games for the disabled, and separate disabled provincial sport organizations. At the community level, persons with developmental handicaps, for example, frequently are steered into Special Olympics programs rather than into regular municipal recreation activities.

Recreationists within <u>institutional</u> settings are struggling with their role, with controversy over the therapeutic vs. fun role of recreation. Many institutional recreationists are struggling to have the value of recreation accepted in terms of the enjoyment which is associated with leisure pursuits.

Furthermore, many recreationists are unsure of what role to play in terms of people moving out of institutions. As individuals are moving into the community, the role of the institutional recreationist can overlap with that of the municipal recreationist; needed communication between the two parties does not always exist. This also raises the question among institution recreationists about the merits of assisting those who are still living within the institution to participate in integrated, community-based recreation activities.

2. Approaches and Models to Recreation Integration

In general, the recreation field has been lagging behind the general societal movement towards integration in other aspects of community life. For example, the Interprovincial

Sport and Recreation Council, in a recent policy statement[4] approved by the Interprovincial and Territorial Recreation Ministers, has indicated that:

1. "The availability of recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities is for the most part regarded by recreation leaders . . . as a low priority rather than a basic right."

2. "Many recreation volunteers and professionals lack an awareness of the recreation needs and capabilities of individuals with disabilities, as well as the skills necessary to plan, develop and implement programs which physically and socially integrate disabled individuals into activities available to a community's general population."

3. "There is a notable lack of involvement of persons with disabilities in the planning and provision of recreation opportunities."

4. "A persistent lack of overall co-ordination among public, voluntary and private sectors has resulted in duplication of programs, gaps in services and inefficient use of resources."

5. "There is not yet a universal recognition of the need for providers of recreational programs/services to develop a range of opportunities within a community in response to the specific abilities, desires and needs of that population's disabled citizens."

However, there are indications that the tide may be turning and that we are entering a period of transition. With increasing visibility of persons with disabilities in the community, there is increasing awareness among recreationists of the right of persons with disabilities to participate more fully in society. There is a lot more training happening in the area of integration than ever before, people are hungry for information and struggling to understand the ideology of integration and how to go about putting it into practice. There is a strong network among those innovators who have demonstrated a commitment to recreation integration that acts as a supportive mechanism for pioneering work in the area.

There seems to be a growing sense of responsibility within the recreation community about the need to provide for recreation integration for persons with disabilities. The policy statement of ISRC referred to above is one indication of this. Fitness Canada has included the disabled as one of

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[4] Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council. Guidelines: Recreation Participation for the Disabled.

MODELS OF RECREATION INTEGRATION

	SURREY	YORK	THUNDER BAY
LEADER-SHIP	3 full time staff	currently no full time staff, all staff responsible	5 full time staff
SUPPORT PEOPLE	volunteers as needed	part time staff as needed	full time staff as needed
COST TO PARTI-CIPATE	fee waiver is available to any-person requesting financial support and this is adver-tized widely	subsidy is available but not widely advertised	staff meets with person need-ing support and person pays what portion he/she can
TRANS-PORTA-TION	costs are subsidi-zed as needed	person provides own transport.	same as above person is assisted as needed
LEISURE EXPER-IENCEs	staff meets with person to deter-interests and/or person partici-pates in leisure education prog-ram to sample options	staff conducts in home inter-view to deter-mine needs, abilities, interests and need for support person	staff meets with person to help determine pre-ferences and/or sets up oppor-tunities to visit potential prog-rams and talk with leaders
CONTACT WITH ASSOC. FOR PEOPLE WITH DISA-BILITIES	meet regularly with these groups to promote participation in programs	meet regularly with these groups to promote participation in programs	meet regularly with these groups to promote participation in programs
CONTACT WITH INSTITU-TIONS	meet regularly to share infor-mation and to look at options for integration	meet regularly to share infor-mation and to look at options for integration	meet regularly to share infor-mation and to look at options for integration
LINKS WITH OTHER RECREA-TION PRO-VIDERS	contact with other providers when the interest to participate is determined	contact with other providers who are con-nected to City of York Rec. services eg. sport groups	contact with other providers when the interest to participate is determined
PUBLI-CITY/ REGIST-RATION	brochure and registration form clearly indicate support to par-ticipate is pro-vided	brochure and registration form clearly indicate support to par-ticipate is pro-vided	brochure and registration form clearly indicate support to par-ticipate is pro-vided

its four major target groups. This year's National Access Awareness Week, in association with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, has instituted the Five-Star Community Award program, to give Canadian communities an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to accessibility and integration of people with disabilities. More applications were submitted in the area of recreation than in the other "Star" areas (housing, transportation, education, and employment).

Thus examples of innovative approaches to recreation integration can be found across the country, for example in such communities as Thunder Bay, the City of York, North York, Ottawa, Mississauga, Burlington, and Peterborough. Particularly noteworthy approaches to recreation integration outside of Ontario include Dartmouth, Nova Scotia and Surrey, British Colombia. However, innovative communities such as these still are in a minority, and they frequently depend upon a key individual who is strongly committed to integration.

The Chart on the facing page compares and contrasts three successful models of integration in Canada, in Surrey, B.C., the City of York, and Thunder Bay. Included in the comparison are dimensions of: leadership; approach to common barriers including cost, lack of leisure experience, transportation, and lack of people to provide support; as well as communication of recreation integration opportunities to associations for people with disabilities, institutions housing people with disabilities, other recreation integration providers, and people with disabilities within the municipality.

These approaches to recreation integration are similar in some dimensions and somewhat different in others. In all cases, however, recreation services are provided with supports which are uncommon within most recreation departments in Canada. Also, the recreation departments are linking people with disabilities to meaningful recreational opportunities and to people with like interests.

The Thunder Bay approach to assisting persons with disabilities in participating in regular recreation programs is of particular interest. This model is described in more detail in Appendix 4.

Money is starting to be directed to integration opportunities, and physical accessibility has been improved because of new building code requirements. However, as discussed in Section III.2, many programs are "accessible" only in terms of mere entrance to the building. There is a tendency for service providers to think mainly of persons using wheelchairs when thinking at all of persons with disabilities.

Many recreationists are not sure how to create "welcoming supportive environments" that give people a sense of belonging. Systemic barriers to participation, such as the cost of programs, lack of transportation or friends to participate with, uncertainty of supports, and others which have been discussed in Section III.3, often limit the ability of persons with disabilities in practice to take advantage of integrated programs which may be available in theory. Even many programs that consider themselves to be accessible are not really. Rarely are persons with disabilities given an opportunity to participate in the design and evaluation of recreation programs and services.

Children are now being given more opportunities for integration than are adults, for example through integrated education and through summer recreation programs. There is more innovation and means of support for children than for adults in integration. Once children have 'tasted' integration, they may be unwilling to return to segregated programs.

3. Issues, Challenges, Obstacles and Barriers

As discussed above, awareness levels of recreation practitioners regarding recreation integration are beginning to increase. However, except for a minority of communities, there is not yet a widespread philosophical and financial commitment to make recreation integration a reality. There appears to be a lack of commitment to problem solve and to develop the creative solutions which are needed in order to support people with disabilities to participate.

For example, few recreation programs provide:

- Support of any form at the time of registration, as well as later, in order to assist persons in participating in recreation programs;
- Any assistance with transportation;
- Any recreation programs during daytime hours for adults which would benefit other segments of the general population, such as persons working part time, shift workers, the unemployed and people at home, as well as persons with disabilities.

There is also a need for:

- Financial incentives to encourage more communities to become involved in the integration process and to engage in creative planning;

- More accessible facilities and programs: while building codes require that new recreation facilities be physically accessible, many older buildings are not and funds are not always available to make them so;

- Training, regarding basic values about persons with disabilities as well as specific approaches to recreation integration;

- Greater awareness among many municipal and community programs about potential sources of funds (e.g. grants from MTR) to support recreation integration;

The role of recreationists as programmers rather than as facilitators is still dominant within the recreation field. Even those who work as facilitators work mainly with groups rather than with individuals. While the recreation field talks about the need for programs and services that increase leisure awareness and how this should be part of the mandate of community recreationists, in practice this is a very low priority for most recreation programs. Few programs assist individuals in identifying which activities would be most enjoyable for them or help them in dealing with any problems which might occur. The recreation community focuses almost exclusively on providing structured recreation for groups of persons, with negligible attention to unstructured recreation for individuals.

When it comes to recreation services, people with disabilities still tend to be looked upon as "dependent clients", rather than as valued individual citizens. People with disabilities need to be treated as unique because they are individuals, rather than because they have a disability. The current manner of providing either no supports, or else identical supports for all people with the same disability, fails to recognize the individual needs of a person, and that persons with disabilities are not all alike and, like anyone else, have varying needs and abilities.

4. Summary and Implications

The field of recreation is becoming more receptive to the concept of integration. Awareness levels are rising, and persons with disabilities are more aware of opportunities and are beginning to assert their right to be part of the community. While most recreation services that are provided to persons with disabilities are still done so in a segregated manner, this is starting to change. A number of service providers are beginning to recognize and understand that persons with disabilities have individual needs and are starting to provide integrated opportunities and to improve accessibility to community programs and facilities. There

are a number of successful integration models in operation within recreation departments across Canada.

Integration efforts, such as those in Thunder Bay, Ontario and Surrey, British Columbia, demonstrate that integration can be successfully accomplished. What is needed is a strong philosophical commitment to integration, backed with financial support and other necessary resources. These programs indicate that once a commitment to integration is made both in theory and in practice, progress can be made in areas such as staff and volunteer training, the provision of transportation and appropriate supports, accessibility to facilities and programs, and the provision of real choices.

Thus now may be an opportune time to move towards greater community integration in recreation.

V. A PROPOSED VISION OF LEISURE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

1. Guiding Principles

Our recommendations for the provision of leisure services for persons with disabilities are based upon the following values or guiding principles:

- Normalization - People with disabilities should be given the opportunity to live a life as similar in nature as possible to that of other members of society, with similar rights and responsibilities and opportunities for individual variation and choice.

- Integration - People should be assisted as necessary to live, work and play alongside other members of the community, with access to regular programs and services. Integration is social as well as physical, where people are not only physically present but also interact with others and feel part of their community.

- Mainstream services - Services, including recreation and leisure services, should be provided to persons with disabilities by generic community agencies, on the same basis as to any other member of the community.

- Support services - Individually based support services should be provided where persons require assistance in order to participate in the community.

- Freedom of choice - All persons should have the right to exercise their personal preferences about what they would like to do.

- Informed choice with real opportunities - "Choice" is not real unless a person indeed has real options to choose from, and has sufficient knowledge about each of these options in order to make an informed choice.

- Community involvement and responsibility - The local community should be the focus when planning services and the centre of responsibility for delivering those services.

- Fun - Leisure should be voluntary and enjoyable for the individual.

These principles are consistent with the philosophy and operating principles of the MCSS Corporate Plan, as well as of the Multi-Year Plan.

2. The Vision Statement

How should persons with disabilities be able to spend their leisure time? How should leisure services be provided? It is helpful to have a vision of how things should be, in order to identify the steps necessary to move toward that direction.

Our recommended vision or description of the desired future state is based upon:

- The values and principles listed above;
- Our assessment of the social environment, including the interest and readiness of key sectors to take necessary action; and
- Existing demonstrations of what is possible.

A. The Vision

Our vision for the future of leisure for persons with disabilities is really very simple:

> *Leisure for people with disabilities should be on the same basis as for anyone else. This means being able to make informed choices about both structured and non-structured leisure activities and having supports as necessary in order to participate in regular community leisure and recreational programs and activities.*

B. What the Vision Means

Inherent in this vision is a recognition that:

- Leisure is broader than it is frequently viewed, involving for example spontaneous and unstructured use of free time, such as friendships, along with participation in formal recreation activities and programs.
- As a result, leisure is not a "frill", but rather it is an integral component of community integration and of quality of life. Life without the opportunity to participate in the community through a range of leisure activities results in isolation.
- Leisure complements rather than replaces employment for most adults.
- Regular recreation services need to welcome and accommodate the participation of persons with disabilities, along with others, in their regular programs.

- Many people will require varying degrees of support in order to enable them to enrich their leisure lives.

Some features and characteristics of our vision for the future include:

- The recreation sector, rather than social service agencies, assuming primary responsibility for planning and addressing the leisure needs of all residents, even if they happen to have a disability:
  - Persons with disabilities welcomed into regular programs, with appropriate outreach, so that the proportion of disabled adults served in these programs approximates their representation in the community;
  - Staff who are sensitized to the needs of persons with disabilities and are willing to assist and accommodate them as necessary;
  - More programs like that of the Thunder Bay Parks and Recreation Department, with staff who work with people on an individual basis to help them participate in leisure activities which they choose themselves;
  - The planning and developing of all recreation programs and services to take into account the needs of persons with disabilities, along with those of other residents of the community, and the involvement of consumer representatives in this process.
- An open, accepting community, where it is taken for granted that persons with disabilities participate alongside others.
- Co-ordination at the local level, with recreation and social service agencies and consumers working together.
- Persons with disabilities participating in the full range of structured and unstructured leisure activities used by others in the community, using regular leisure and recreation services on an integrated basis.
- The availability of flexible and portable support services, to permit participation in community living, including recreation and leisure, based upon personal preferences and informed choice.

In short, persons, irrespective of any disability, should be given the opportunity, and support if necessary, in order to

choose and to participate in leisure on the same basis as anyone else in the community.

The above vision is a description of a desired future state. While the current system still has a long way to go to achieve this vision, it has already started to move in this direction. The proposed vision is consistent with the philosophies and direction of many other services for persons with disabilities, as well as the current direction of many recreation programs.

Thus our assessment of the current context is that achievement of this vision is not an unattainable dream; with some commitment from the major players, achievement <u>is</u> very realistic and possible.

VI. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ROLES, POLICY AND PROGRAM APPROACHES

What needs to be done to help turn the proposed vision of leisure for persons with disabilities into a reality?

This chapter makes a number of recommendations which can be grouped as follows:

- Development of a policy statement;
- Primary roles and responsibilities - for the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation and its community clients, and for the Ministry of Community and Social Services;
- Implications for other policies, programs and approaches.

1. Development of a Policy Statement

As a first step, the Ministry of Community and Social Services should develop a policy statement about leisure for persons with disabilities and share this with its own staff and clients as well as with the recreation community in Ontario. The policy statement should:

- Acknowledge the importance of leisure to independent living, community integration and to quality of life;
- Adopt the vision presented in the previous chapter, in particular the philosophy of integration in recreation activities;
- Set out primary roles and responsibilities which the various levels of the social services and recreation communities should assume;
- In particular, identify what roles, both indirect/facilitative as well as direct, which MCSS should take to enhance the leisure lifestyles of persons with disabilities in Ontario.

Recommendation: The Ministry of Community and Social Services should develop a policy statement about leisure for persons with disabilities.

2. The Recreation Sector should have Primary Responsibility for Recreation for Disabled Persons

A. The Mandate

The recreation delivery system in Ontario has a mandate for the provision of recreation to all persons in Ontario. There is no reason for persons with disabilities to be excluded or to be treated any differently than anyone else in the planning and delivery of recreation services. Indeed, the Community Recreation Policy Statement, approved by the Ontario Cabinet, specifies that "recreation services should comply with the intent and spirit of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and human rights legislation". The disabled are specifically mentioned by both the Charter and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

At the provincial level, the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation has lead responsibility for recreation. As the Community Recreation Policy Statement indicates, municipal recreation departments have primary responsibility for the provision of recreation services at the community level.

It is neither appropriate nor desirable for MCSS to take on any more than a supporting role in recreation.

B. Acknowledgement, Commitment and Action Plan

To fulfill its mandate, the recreation sector needs to:

- Acknowledge its role and responsibility to include persons with disabilities within its programs and services.

  Disabled persons constitute 16 percent of the Ontario adult population (14 percent of the total population including youth), and consequently should be entitled to at least 16 percent of services and public funds spent on recreation. Indeed, most persons with disabilities have the greatest need for recreation, for example, as a result of their isolation from the community, and because they are excluded from most private recreation facilities, due to lack of income and other factors. Thus a strong case can be made that even more than 16 percent of services should go to them.

  If persons with disabilities, however unintentionally, continue to be excluded from recreation programs, and if as ISRC has indicated, recreation for persons with disabilities continues to be viewed as a low priority rather than as a basic right, this could be viewed as a form of discrimination.

- Make a commitment to recognizing and to overcoming systemic barriers, such as those discussed earlier in this report, which result in persons with disabilities being underserved by recreation programs and services.

- Develop a strategic action plan in order to enable the recreation community to move towards the provision of equitable service, on a fully integrated basis, to persons with disabilities.

C. The Strategic Action Plan

MTR, as the lead ministry for recreation, should develop the action plan, with consultation and assistance from MCSS. In addition, it would be helpful for the partners of both MTR (e.g. PRFO) and MCSS (e.g. OACL, PUSH) to be involved. Following are some factors which should be considered in the development of the strategic plan.

Better Use of Current Funding

Large amounts of new moneys or additional services for the most part are not necessarily required. What is required is a rethinking of existing programs, perhaps with a reallocation of current resources so that persons with disabilities are welcomed and included, rather than excluded. Indeed, the development of new add-on services may not be necessary. Examples of some steps which could be taken without major new expenditures include:

- Greater welcoming and acceptance of persons with disabilities into recreation programs, with more extensive outreach activities;

- Training and information sharing among recreation managers and practitioners (while additional funds would be helpful, much can be done through the use or reallocation of existing training budgets);

- A greater focus in recreation planning and program delivery on specifically considering the needs of various special needs groups such as persons with disabilities in the community[5]; due to demographic and societal changes, the population is much more segmented and the "general public" as such does not exist any more - and failure to specifically plan for various sub-populations in the community can result in the most articulate sectors getting the best service with the needs of others being unintentionally neglected;

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[5] Fitness Canada's approach, whereby the disabled are specifically identified as one of their four major target groups, is one such approach.

- An examination of all existing programs and policies to identify systemic barriers and approaches to encourage and facilitate integration;

- A requirement that all new initiatives, including programs, grants, and activities by or funded by the Recreation Division take into account how persons with disabilities will benefit;

- A reallocation of the funding currently going towards segregated recreation programs for persons with disabilities into integration;

- Encouraging PRFO to involve its member groups in identifying what it and they can do to ensure that appropriate services are in place and used by persons with disabilities;

- Involving disabled consumers in discussions and planning at all levels to identify ways in which more persons with disabilities can be accommodated and how programs and services can be fully accessible and appropriate.

Additional Funding

While much can be done with more effective use of existing budgets, changing attitudes and reorienting a system that has systematically excluded persons with disabilities will not be easy, and short-term assistance can greatly facilitate this process. Change of any form, no matter how needed, is always difficult. Financial assistance can act as an important catalyst, to assist organizations in the reorientation process.

Furthermore, the allocation of resources is an important symbol which demonstrates what are truly considered to be priorities. While a lot of new money is not required, the allocation of additional funding for facilitating recreation integration can send an important signal that MTR does view the participation of persons with disabilities as a priority. Conversely, a failure to take a public stand and to back this up with resources can give the opposite message - that the disabled continue to be a low priority.

Examples of possible areas for additional funding by MTR include:

- A proactive initiative of some form on recreation integration, demonstrating concretely MTR's commitment to the issue (e.g. similar to other special initiatives funded by MTR in order to address major needs, such as: the Best Ever program, creation of the Fitness Section, and the Creative Initiatives Program for Older Adults);

- A grants program to assist municipalities and perhaps other recreation agencies in reorienting their programs and becoming more accessible, as well as aiding recreation departments in providing support to individuals to assist them in participating;

- Grants for renovations, equipment and other modifications to make programs as well as buildings fully accessible.

Lack of Daytime Recreation Programs for Adults

One problem impeding greater use of community recreation programs by many disabled adults is that there are few recreation programs for adults (except for seniors) available during the daytime.

However, this is a problem facing other populations as well as persons with disabilities. For example, in addition to persons with disabilities, changes in demographics and in the labour market are resulting in increasing numbers of people working part time, shift workers, persons who are unemployed, mothers not working or on a break from employment, etc. These groups of people also have free time during the day, and could benefit through the availability of daytime recreation programs.

It should be the responsibility of municipal recreation departments to explore means of servicing these groups of people, as well as in possibly making better use of community facilities (e.g. YM-YWCAs) during their "down" times. It would be appropriate for MTR to point out the need and to offer ideas and suggestions.

Segregated Sport

Amateur sport in particular is almost entirely segregated and out of step with the general societal movement towards inclusion of persons with disabilities. Integration in sport is important - both to give athletes who happen to have a disability the opportunity to participate in regular settings, as well as for the public image sport portrays in our society. Involvement of disabled athletes as part of regular amateur sporting events, rather than in "special" events at different times in different settings, can help demonstrate that persons with disabilities belong and can be accommodated in society.

We recommend that MTR explore means of integrating segregated sport associations and segregated games for the disabled as part of regular organizations and events. For example, instead of having separate Ontario Games for the Able-bodied and Games for the Disabled, there should be one Ontario Games

for all athletes. Where possible, races and events themselves should be integrated; in other cases, parallel contests (e.g. separate games for wheelchair basketball) can be run.

Recommendation: The recreation sector has a mandate for the provision of recreation to all persons in Ontario, including persons with disabilities. It should acknowledge its role and responsibility to include persons with disabilities within its programs and services, and make a commitment to recognizing and to overcoming systemic barriers. MTR should develop a strategic action plan to assist the recreation community in taking necessary action in this regard. The action plan should consider means of better using existing funding, as well as providing additional funding, to bring about greater recreation integration.

3. Primary Role for MCSS in Recreation - Providing Support Services

MCSS's primary role in recreation for persons with disabilities should be indirect. Rather than directly operating recreation programs, MCSS and its client organizations should provide support services as required to assist and enable individuals to engage in meaningful unstructured and structured leisure activities, and to use community recreation opportunities and programs.

In many ways, providing support for leisure is analogous to the role of a job coach in the employment area. The level and type of support needed will vary from individual to individual. For example, all the support that many persons with physical disabilities require would be flexible and portable attendant care.

Others, especially people with mental handicaps and psychiatric disabilities, may require assistance in learning how to use the community and in meeting and interacting with others, learning about options and how to make choices, finding out about the availability of various recreation programs, how to participate (including skills specific to the activity, e.g. participating in an exercise class or playing soccer, as well as related considerations such as dress and demeanor), and related "life skills" (e.g. using transportation to get to and from the activity).

A leisure supporter can also act as a facilitator or connector, working with recreation service providers as necessary to help them be open and accommodating. Some people may just need some initial assistance in getting started or in "connecting" with a program; others, especially persons with challenging needs or who have recently returned to the community from an institution, may need more intensive support over an extended period of time.

There are numerous models by which support of one form or another can be provided, e.g.

- attendant care for people with physical care needs
- brokerage
- APSWs
- job coaches
- opportunity planners
- other professional supporters or advocates
- consumers, self-help groups
- volunteer advocates
- personal support networks (e.g. "Joshua Committees")
- leisure buddies
- leisure educators
- recreation staff
- others

There are pros and cons to each of these models. For example, while volunteers can be very effective, many people will require the level of support and continuity which can only be provided by paid staff. Job coaches may assist their clients with leisure to some degree, because the quality of one's leisure life can affect success in employment, but their major focus is on work. Opportunity planners, as proposed in the SARC Report, may have a coercive element in their role which is inappropriate for leisure. And the objective of any form of support service should be, to the extent possible, to assist in the development of "natural" support networks so that specialized support is not necessary.

From the point of view of leisure, there are a variety of ways, and probably not <u>one</u> best means, in which support can be provided, as this may vary in accordance with individual needs and other factors. What <u>is</u> important is that support be available to all persons in need. Lack of support is a major barrier to meaningful and satisfying use of leisure time.

The Services for the Disabled Branch, as part of its policy development process, should develop a strategy for the provision of support to assist persons in participating in leisure.

Ideally, municipal recreation would also make the provision of support one of their functions to make their services accessible, as Thunder Bay and a number of other communities are doing. But the division of responsibilities, with MCSS primarily responsible for support services, and mainstream agencies, MTR and its community networks responsible for service provision, is analogous to the relationship in other areas, e.g. supportive housing. Potential overlap between

support provided by recreation and by social service agencies can be dealt with on an individual basis in each community.

Recommendation: MCSS should provide support services as needed to enable persons with disabilities to participate in unstructured and structured recreation activities.

4. Implications for Employment Programs and Initiatives

A. Relationship between Employment and Leisure

For most people in our society, recreation is viewed as a complement, rather than an alternative to work. We see no reason why this should be any different for persons with disabilities. The evidence is clear: with appropriate support, anyone is capable of work, irrespective of the degree or type of disability.[6]

Thus it is not appropriate to view leisure as a means of "filling in the day" for persons with disabilities. This would be contrary to how others in society use leisure, contrary to the principles of normalization and community integration, and is unnecessary. Instead of developing leisure programs for people who are not working, they should be assisted in obtaining employment. Supported employment projects have demonstrated that it is possible to support anyone in employment, including people returning to the community for the first time and others who are not considered "job ready".

Thus a major implication and recommendation of this study is the need to view employment, rather than leisure, as the primary activity of adults. Emphasis should be placed on assisting persons in employment, for example via supported employment, rather than in leisure or non-vocational alternatives. Given that most persons with disabilities are unemployed, and that many developmentally handicapped persons have never had any experience with competitive employment or are just returning to the community from institutions, an even greater emphasis on supported employment than at present will be necessary.

This approach provides persons with disabilities the same degree of choice as for anyone else in our society; except for those who are independently wealthy or of retirement age, employment to earn one's living is generally a necessity, not an option. This philosophy is consistent with the thrust of

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[6] E.g. see the two reports by Burt Perrin Associates which are listed in Appendix 2: Trends and Innovations Regarding Employment for People with Handicaps, and Innovative Approaches to Employment for Persons with Disabilities.

the recommendations in the SARC Report, and it is consistent with the strong emphasis the consumer movement is placing on employment.

B. Nature of Employment

Not all work available in the labour market consists of the traditional full time, nine-to-five permanent job. For persons with disabilities, as for other members of the labour market, employment need not necessarily consist of jobs which are full time and permanent. Particularly for some people who may never have had any previous work experience, supported part-time or short-term work, at least for an initial period, may be an appropriate choice.

Training and education also may be appropriate activities for adults, as long as they are designed to lead to rather than be a substitute for employment.

C. Older Adults

It is normal for older adults to be retired in our society and not have to work. The same should apply to older adults who happen to have a disability.

Recreation programs for seniors are provided or co-ordinated by most municipal recreation departments, which are increasingly aware of the need to examine their role and expand service in this area. Thus recreation for disabled older adults should be provided through regular recreation programs for seniors.

D. School-to-Work Transition

For youth leaving school, the primary focus, as with anyone else, should be on assisting them in obtaining employment. For this age group, however, a long-term focus is especially important and consequently, training and education activities may be appropriate. Emphasis should be placed on exposing individuals to various, age-appropriate mainstream options.

As for anyone else, leisure should complement employment and education. Leisure should not be viewed as a way of filling in time for people with nothing else to do.

Integration into regular education may ultimately minimize or eliminate the need for any special assistance.

E. Older Adults Returning From Facilities

There is ample evidence that even persons who have spent their entire lives in institutional settings, given proper supports, are capable of working in regular employment

settings. But what about older adults, for whom it might not be fair to expect them to "learn a new trade"?

"Seniors" in the general community and for the purposes of many community recreation programs are now defined as young as 50 years. We feel that this could serve as a useful guideline for people returning to the community. Rather than placing all people past 50 years in employment, an appropriate option, depending upon their own interests, might be to assist them in using community recreation programs which are geared for older adults (as well as those designed for adults of any age). However, especially given the trend towards flexible retirement in our society, we suggest that 50 years, or any other age which is chosen, serve as a flexible guideline rather than as a rigid criterion.

F. Persons With Challenging Needs

Persons with challenging needs will likely require more intensive degrees of support than will others, possibly on an ongoing basis. However, evidence from supported employment projects indicate that even clients with extreme degrees of disability have been successfully supported in regular job settings, often at competitive wages.

Thus, except for more intensive degrees of support, we do not see any reason why persons with challenging needs should be treated any differently than anyone else, either with respect to employment or to leisure.

Recommendation: Employment, rather than leisure, should be viewed as the primary activity of adults, including adults with disabilities. Emphasis should be placed on assisting persons in employment, for example via supported employment, rather than in leisure or non-vocational alternatives.

5. Implications for Non-Vocational Day Programs

Segregated non-vocational day programs, such as developmental day centres and centre-based life skills programs for persons with developmental handicaps, are inappropriate for a number of reasons. For example:

- They take people out of the employment market.
- They are devaluing to the participants.
- They isolate people from the community.
- They do not assist people in using regular community recreation programs and services.
- They detract from rather than promote community integration.

We view non-vocational day programs as analogous to sheltered workshops. Just as the objective of Project Opportunity is to develop alternatives to sheltered workshops, we recommend that non-vocational day programs, as they are presently formulated, should be gradually phased out.

These programs, as they are now operate, are neither leisure nor employment programs. They provide "leisure" only to the extent that they pose an alternative to employment, but it seems that their major objective is as an alternative to employment for persons thought to be incapable of work.

These programs should change from their current segregated, centre-based approach to supporting persons to participate in community settings. This could involve a change in emphasis in current programs, or their replacement by other programs which would either:

- Support people in employment, or
- Support people in spending their leisure in the community.

To be sure, persons who have only had limited exposure or opportunity to participate in leisure and employment in integrated community settings, may need extensive life skills training. However, "life skills" can most effectively be developed while supporting a person in a real life situation. For example, there is ample evidence that persons do not have to be "job ready" in order to work in competitive employment settings, if they are provided with support. Similarly, one component of assisting a person in using community recreation opportunities and in making informed leisure choices can include training if needed in skills such as using transportation, appropriate dress and behaviour, using money, etc. Rather than a segregated facility, the community, including a person's own home, then becomes the setting for the development of life skills.

Thus non-vocational day programs should be gradually transformed in programs which either provide supported employment or support persons in community integration and leisure participation. Training for staff of these programs should be provided to assist them in assuming their new roles; any savings in rent or capital expenditures for current physical premises which will no longer be needed should be diverted into providing support in the community.

Recommendation: Non-vocational day programs, such as developmental day centres and centre-based life skills programs, should be phased out and transformed into programs providing either supported employment or support for participation in leisure in regular community settings.

6. Implications for Income Maintenance

It is inappropriate, as indicated earlier in this report, to view leisure as a "frill". It is an integral component of community integration, the development of friendships and other relationships, and of quality of life. Leisure participation also has a major impact on self esteem and on health.

Lack of income is a major barrier to leisure participation. It not only makes participation in formal recreation programs difficult or impossible, but also limits opportunity for unstructured leisure participation such as spending time with friends and with others.

Because the role of leisure in quality of life and community integration is not explicitly acknowledged or treated as a necessary service, income support programs rarely make provision for leisure expenses in setting levels of support payments.

Recommendation: Income maintenance programs should take into account expenses required for an acceptable level of leisure participation when establishing benefit levels.

7. Other Roles for MCSS

A. Facilitation and Co-ordination

MCSS should not have primary responsibility for the delivery of recreation services for persons with disabilities. However, it has an important co-ordination and liaison role to play, in working together with the recreation community.

For example, at the corporate level, MCSS should work together with MTR, on a bilateral basis, as well as with other ministries through Interministry Committees on Recreation and on the Disabled, to assist in identifying needs and developing plans to address these.

At the community level, MCSS Operations staff can bring together MTR field staff, municipal recreation, other recreation providers such as YMCAs and Boards of Education, and consumer groups and disability organizations in a community development process. At this level, MCSS Operations staff can encourage and assist local recreation agencies in taking responsibility for and in providing appropriate integrated services to persons with disabilities.

B. Unstructured Leisure

Unstructured leisure, to some extent, can be viewed as a recreation sector responsibility. However, most recreation

programs focus on structured recreation. While the field acknowledges leisure education as a role for recreation programs, few departments view this as a priority or offer this service at all.

Other aspects of unstructured leisure refer to assisting persons in the development of social relationships, friendships as well as independent use of the community. These critical components of leisure clearly fall within the mandate of MCSS.

Some ways in which MCSS can foster participation in unstructured leisure include:

Support Services

As Section VI.3 indicates, MCSS should have primary responsibility for making available support to individuals to assist them in making informed choices and in developing the necessary competencies to have a meaningful leisure life, including relationships with others and other forms of unstructured as well as structured leisure.

MCSS Policies and Programs

MCSS should undertake a review of its policies and programs, including those which it funds others to operate, to identify existing barriers as well as potential opportunities for enhanced leisure participation. For example, some policies and practices in group homes, such as restrictions on the use of telephones and lack of privacy, can unintentionally make it difficult for persons to maintain friendships and relationships with others. Similarly, reduced staffing on weekends can limit opportunities for persons to take advantage of leisure opportunities in the community.

C. Recreation in Institutions

MCSS has its own recreation staff working in Schedules I and II Facilities. In addition, recreation staff work out of nursing homes and Homes for Special Care.

Recreation for Institutional Residents

We feel that the same general strategy for persons with disabilities in the community - that MCSS should provide support but the recreation sector should be responsible for recreation services - should also apply to institutions. We recommend that the role of recreationists within institutional settings should change from that of "therapeutic" or service providers to connectors/facilitators/supporters.

We see no reason why facility residents should not be assisted in using community recreation programs and services.

This would represent more appropriate recreational experiences than segregated programs within a facility and would provide excellent, non-threatening exposure to the community. It can also give people an opportunity to experience leisure in a community setting, before discharge. This approach would require facility recreationists to take on a very different role, and to work closely with municipal recreation in their community.

Deinstitutionalization

The integral role that leisure plays in independent community living and integration into the community should be recognized in planning for deinstitutionalization. For example, municipal recreation should be part of community transition teams' planning for community living of persons about to be discharged. Institutional recreationists should establish relationships with their municipal recreation counterparts in communities where persons will be returning to live from facilities. Divestment and diversification strategies for use of institutional resources in the promotion of community living, as discussed in Challenges and Opportunities, apply to recreation as with other areas of community living.

Recommendation: MCSS has significant roles in enhancing leisure for persons with disabilities via: liaison and coordination with the recreation community at both the corporate and community levels; supporting unstructured leisure; and facilitating use of community recreation for present institutional residents as well as for those returning to the community, redefining the role of institutional recreationists, and establishing liaison between recreationists in institutional and community settings.

8. Staff Training and Education

In order to bring about the changes suggested in this report, in order to enable persons with disabilities to take advantage of regular leisure opportunities, there is a need for expanded training and education of staff.

For example, recreation providers require training about how to plan and deliver services in such a way that persons with disabilities are included, for example on topics such as:

- attitudes and values about persons with disabilities;
- reconceptualizing their role as enablers, including specific means of supporting and assisting persons to participate in recreation;
- how to facilitate integration and make persons with disabilities welcome in regular recreation programs.

Staff and volunteers who provide support to assist persons use their leisure time might require training in areas such as:

- what is leisure and why it is important;
- learning about community recreation opportunities and organizations;
- how to provide support to individuals;
- how to negotiate with recreation providers about access, accommodation, and other factors;
- assisting persons in the development of friendships.

MTR should take primary responsibility for the planning and delivery of training of recreation workers, while MCSS should have primary responsibility for the training of support workers. However, training is an area for potential inter-ministry co-operation, as well as with the client groups of both ministries.

In addition, regular education and training programs in colleges and universities should better prepare their students, in both recreation and community service worker programs, for enabling persons with disabilities to participate in community leisure. For example, recreation students should learn about means of facilitating recreation integration and how to act as enablers/facilitators rather than just program providers; community service workers should learn about the role of leisure in community integration and how to support people in both structured and unstructured leisure. While responsibility for colleges and universities falls under the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU), both MCSS and MTR have some contacts with individual institutions and practitioner bodies.

Recommendation: Training should be provided to both recreation providers and to support workers. Both MTR and MCSS, as well as MCU, have responsibilities in this area.

9. Grants for Recreation Integration

As we have indicated before, much can be done within existing budgets, where there is a will, to include persons with disabilities into regular recreation programs with a change in attitude and program priorities. But there is still a need for money, such as through short-term (i.e. one to three year) grants to redress present inequalities.

In many cases, municipal recreation departments need to rethink their means of providing services and programs. Change, even when the long-term benefits are clear, is never easy. And recreation departments, which tend to respond to demand, are facing competing pressures placed on their services and budgets. Short-term funding can serve as an important catalyst, stimulating action which might not occur otherwise.

In particular, the availability of grants to municipal recreation departments can act as a strong incentive to enable them to reorient their programs and services in order to shift from a segregation to an integration approach. Grants can enable them to systematically review their programs and services in order to identify means of eliminating systemic barriers and to accommodate persons with disabilities into their programs. Action steps might involve a reorganization of department services, staff training, and other steps.

Grants can also assist municipal recreation departments in hiring new staff or in redefining current roles in order to provide support to assist individuals in participation, as Thunder Bay and some other communities are doing. We have already spoken of the need for financial assistance to make recreation facilities and programs accessible.

It also would be appropriate to assist municipal recreation departments prepare for deinstitutionalization, especially when significant numbers of persons are being returned to their communities. In addition, it would be appropriate to assist those recreation departments in order to provide additional service to persons presently living in institutional settings within their community. (In addition to direct financial assistance, secondment or transfer of staff from the institution to the municipality is another possibility).

It also may be appropriate to make grants available to consumer groups. With additional resources, some consumer groups may be able to work together with community recreation service providers, helping them in identifying needs and barriers to participation, as well as in developing workable solutions.

Who should provide these grants? MTR is the logical choice: it has responsibility for recreation, and municipal recreation departments, the major recipient group for the grants, are their clients. If MCSS were to provide grants, this might reinforce the erroneous notion that persons with disabilities are somehow different from others in the community and that their recreation needs are not part of the basic responsibilities of a recreation department.

However, given the importance of assisting mainstream agencies such as recreation departments in reorienting their services and assuming responsibility for persons with disabilities, it could also be appropriate for MCSS to play a role in providing short-term assistance. This may be an area for co-operation and shared responsibility between MTR and MCSS, with both ministries jointly funding a grants program.

Recommendation: MTR, possibly in co-operation with MCSS, should establish a grants program to assist municipalities in including persons with disabilities in recreation programs and services.

10. Roles for Disability Agencies

We feel that disability agencies such as local Associations for Community Living should resist the temptation to directly provide special recreation programs for their clients. Instead, they should act as advocates and connectors, in two major roles:

- Making connections with community recreation service providers, encouraging and assisting them in including persons with disabilities in their own programs; and
- Providing support and facilitation to individuals to enable them to use regular leisure opportunities in the community, as well as assistance with unstructured leisure.

Appendix 3 briefly describes how Community Living Mississauga and the West Island Readaptation Centre are operating in this mode.

In addition, agencies can work together with parents, as they are doing in other areas of community living such as employment and housing, to help them in understanding the benefits of recreation integration.

Recommendation: Disability agencies should act as advocates, connectors and supporters, rather than as direct providers of recreation services and programs.

11. Drop-In Programs

Is there a role for any drop-in programs? Some drop-in programs are consumer run (e.g. On Our Own's drop-in for its membership made up of ex-psychiatric inmates, programs operated by some Centres for Independent Living). Participation in meetings of consumer groups (e.g. People First meetings) can assist in the development of self confidence and the development of relationships and thus can be viewed as a form of leisure. Some drop-in programs are also run by agencies (e.g. some newly created New Brunswick supported programs are

using their former workshop space as a drop-in for persons between jobs).

While these types of programs are basically segregated, there are analogous situations with other special interest groups within the general population, such as ethnic groups which may offer special programs for their members. There are also models with some other special needs groups, for example mother's groups in some Ontario Housing developments (the focus for these frequently are on nutrition, childraising, fitness, or on other aspects of their lives).

We feel that drop-ins can be appropriate as <u>one</u> possible option which people can choose, if they wish, for spending some portion of their free time. They can provide an opportunity for those who would like to spend some time with others who are in similar situations to themselves. They may provide some opportunity for socialization for people who otherwise might be alone.

Our society is lacking in public spaces where people can "hang out". This is particularly severe for people with limited income as well as others with no space of their own (e.g. who live in group homes or with parents), who have few places where they can go to be with others. Municipal recreation frequently provides space which special interest groups can use for their own recreational purposes. It would be appropriate for municipal recreation to also make space available for consumer groups to use for their own purposes.

We do urge caution with respect to drop-in centres and similar programs. As a <u>complement</u> to the use of community opportunities, particularly for consumer-run programs, they can be a vehicle for socialization, for confidence building, and for being with friends. However, they are inappropriate if they are used as an <u>alternative</u> to community recreation. Their is also a danger, particularly for agency-run programs, of drop-in centres being little different from existing day programs and in that sense detracting from community integration. And providing municipal space to consumer groups by no means detracts from the obligation of municipal recreation to provide for integration in all regular programs and services.

12. Volunteering

Volunteering is a common way in which many non-disabled people spend often considerable portions of their free time. Volunteering can also be an appropriate leisure alternative for persons who happen to have a disability.

The issue is what constitutes "volunteer work". There are a wide variety of possible volunteer activities, e.g. leadership in a non-profit organization, assisting with recreation activities, fundraising and political activity, etc. Volun-

teers are essential to the operation of many recreation and community services.

We suggest that an appropriate criterion for what constitutes volunteering for persons with disabilities is activity which non-disabled persons would also do without pay. It is also useful to consider what is not volunteer work. In this category we place employment without pay. Unpaid work, supported or otherwise, may be appropriate as training - discussion of this issue is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is not "volunteer work" and it is not leisure.

13. Public Attitudes

Many of the people we interviewed spoke of the need for greater acceptance of persons with disabilities by the general public and suggested greater public relations efforts in this direction. We heard some complementary comments about efforts such as the Office for Disabled Persons media campaign, MTR's "Kids on the Block" program, and the National Access Awareness Week.

Leisure to a large extent involves voluntary behaviour, in that people are usually free to choose what they want to do and who they wish to associate with in their free time. Thus public attitudes are even more important and more complex than for areas such as employment, where people may have to hire or work with others whether they like it or not.

Our own feeling is that while public relations campaigns can do some good, attitudes tend to follow behaviour and the best way to change public attitudes is via demonstrations, through the visible inclusion of persons with disabilities in all forms of community activities, so that their presence is commonplace and taken for granted. When people with disabilities participate together with other members of the public in all aspects of community life, including community recreation activities, relationships are more likely to develop and people be seen for their abilities rather than disabilities.

Consequently, we feel that the best way to change public attitudes is to maximize the integration of persons with disabilities in recreation and sport - as well as in all other aspects of community life - as quickly and as visibly as possible.

14. Other Disadvantaged Groups

Disabled persons, while the focus of this paper, are not the only segment of the population which are underserved by community recreation services. While persons with dis-

abilities may have some specialized needs, they also have much in common with others. For example, as we pointed out earlier, recreation programs are rarely available during the day for unemployed persons and part time and shift workers, as well as for persons with disabilities. Recreation programs are often unavailable or inappropriate for people such as social assistance recipients and the working poor who are living in poverty.

All these groups mentioned above are client groups of MCSS. Therefore, there may be some value in taking a broad perspective, in urging the recreation community to consider how it can better meet the leisure needs of a variety of disadvantaged groups which tend to be underserved by current recreation programs and activities.

VII. STRATEGIES FOR MCSS TO MOVE TOWARDS DESIRED VISION

The previous chapter made a number of recommendations regarding roles, policy and program approaches in order to make the vision regarding leisure for persons with disabilities a reality. What is needed to get started?

This chapter indicates some initial steps for MCSS to take in order to move towards the recommended vision. Many of these steps can take place simultaneously, and we feel that it is realistic for at least some action on all these steps to take place within the first year. Thus this chapter can be viewed as a recommended first year action plan.

1. Development of a Strategic Plan

MCSS needs to develop its own strategic plan for acting upon the implications of this report. Such a plan should provide guidance for both short and longer-term action steps. Components of the strategic plan on leisure should include:

- A policy statement on leisure as discussed in Section VI.1, which acknowledges the importance of leisure to community integration and endorses the proposed vision based upon the philosophy of integration in recreation activities;
- Areas for direct action by MCSS;
- Plans for liaison with MTR and with other ministries;
- Plans for consultation with others, such as consumer groups and ministry client organizations;
- Areas for priority attention;
- Funding implications;
- Plans for updating the plan, at least on an annual basis.

2. Review MCSS Programs and Policies with Implications for Leisure

MCSS should not play the lead role in the actual provision of recreation and leisure services. Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter VI, there are a number of areas in which MCSS has critical roles to play.

Support Services. MCSS has primary responsibility for the provision of support services to assist and enable persons

with disabilities to participate in leisure in regular community settings. The need for support services is one of the most important findings and implications of this study. Without the availability of appropriate support services, recreation integration - and community integration - will not be possible. Thus probably the highest immediate priority for MCSS should be to identify and start to implement an approach for the provision of support.

Other MCSS Policies and Programs. Chapter VI identified a number of other areas of MCSS operation which relate to leisure and require policy action, including: assistance in unstructured leisure, employment, phasing out of developmental day centres and life skills programs, income support, use of ministry recreation staff in institutions and involving community recreationists in deinstitutionalization plans. Implications of this paper for these and other ministry programs which may relate to leisure in any way should be considered.

3. Joint Planning with MTR

MTR, as the lead ministry in recreation, should have primary responsibility for recreation for persons with disabilities, just as it does for other residents of Ontario. Therefore it is absolutely critical that MTR and its community partners act upon their mandate. Recreation integration can only take place if the recreation community welcomes persons with disabilities into all their programs. This is the most important implication of this report.

Consequently, it is critical that MCSS engage in discussions with MTR, on a bilateral basis, about the need for action on MTR's part and how MCSS can assist. Because policy changes may be required, these discussions should be at a senior management level.

In addition, such discussions should involve consideration of the establishment of a grants program to encourage and assist municipalities in including persons with disabilities in their recreation programs.

4. Other Ministries

We have focused on MTR in this report because it is the lead ministry for recreation and because its clients, municipal recreation departments, are the major providers of recreation services in the community. However, the activities of many other ministries and agencies may also be related to recreation to some degree, e.g. Colleges and Universities, Education, Culture and Communications, Citizenship, Housing, Health, Natural Resources, Municipal Affairs, Transportation

and a number of others. In some cases, these other ministries provide recreation programs directly or train recreation practitioners; in other cases, their programs and policies may indirectly facilitate or impede participation in the community by persons with disabilities.

Interministry forums, such as the Interministry Committees on Recreation and on the Disabled, may be appropriate approaches to discussing what other ministries, in addition to MCSS and MTR, can do to facilitate recreation integration.

5. Action at the Community Level

Both MCSS and MTR have independently identified the local community as the focus for planning and delivering services. Both ministries have decentralized structures, with field staff located throughout Ontario. Each has strong connections with local agencies.

Consequently, while overall policies can be developed at the corporate level, actual activity must be locally based. Thus we see a major role for MCSS Operations staff in the implementation of the proposed vision for recreation for persons with disabilities.

To stimulate local activity, MCSS Operations staff should establish contact with MTR field staff, and jointly bring together municipal recreation and other key recreation providers with consumers and disability organizations. They should play a lead role in the development of local, community-based plans for recreation integration in each community.

6. Meeting in Thunder Bay

As we have indicated earlier in this report, some of the most innovative approaches to recreation integration have been undertaken in Thunder Bay. The people involved with these activities are eager to share their experiences with others.

Consequently, we feel that it would be helpful to draw upon the Thunder Bay expertise when developing approaches to recreation integration provincially and in other communities. We suggest convening a meeting in Thunder Bay, involving staff from the Parks and Recreation Department, HAGI, MTR and MCSS field staff, as well as representatives from MCSS's Services for the Disabled Branch and MTR's Recreation Branch, possibly using an external facilitator.

The purpose of the meeting would be to discuss some practical means of moving toward recreation integration across the province, based upon consideration of this report as well as the Thunder Bay experience. We feel that such a meeting

would produce suggestions for other community recreation programs, as well as means in which both MCSS and MTR can help stimulate more recreation integration. We feel that it would be appropriate for MCSS to convene this meeting, possibly in conjunction with MTR.

7. Legal Requirements

There are many good reasons why persons with disabilities should be able to participate in regular recreation programs and services and should be assisted in doing so. Irrespective of these, it may also be a legal requirement.

Both the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code provide for the right of access of persons with disabilities to public facilities. Both also provide for the concept of reasonable accommodation. Both also indicate that systemic as well as overt discrimination is outside the law.

For example, a recent decision of the Supreme Court of Canada regarding Section 15 of the Charter indicated that equal treatment may be discriminatory, and that there may be an obligation on government to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities.

Thus recreation programs which systemically exclude persons with disabilities, even if this is done unintentionally, may be in violation of human rights legislation. They may have an obligation to accommodate persons with disabilities.

We also have heard of instances where some recreation programs, under the guise of risk management or liability concerns, have refused to admit persons with disabilities to their programs, or have imposed stringent conditions on participation. The legality of practices such as this appears especially questionable.

Thus we suggest that MCSS should carry out or commission a legal review of this area. Since the government's Community Recreation Policy Statement indicates that: "Recreation services should comply with the intent and spirit of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and human rights legislation," this review should take into account the intent and spirit as well as the letter of the law. Once this review is completed, MCSS should make sure that all applicable recreation agencies, as well as consumer and disability organizations, are aware of the rights of persons with disabilities and the legal obligations of service providers to make their services accessible.

8. Information Sharing

There is a major need for more knowledge and information about leisure and disability. For example, probably most

people within the recreation community are ignorant of the need to plan for the inclusion of persons with disabilities into their programs, and how to do this. Many within the disability community are unaware of the importance of leisure to community integration. The two communities are largely unaware of the other's existence. Few in either community are aware of the many positive demonstrations of how recreation integration can be achieved.

There are a variety of ways in which the recreation and the disability communities can learn more about each other and about recreation integration. There are a number of existing channels which could be used for information sharing, e.g. conferences and publications of a variety of organizations.

Consideration could be given to other means of information sharing. For example, MCSS could bring together representatives of the major provincial disability, consumer and recreation organizations for information sharing and planning purposes. Formal channels of information-sharing could be developed, such as a newsletter for presenting ideas and actual examples of approaches to recreation integration: MTR's Creative Initiatives Program for Older Adults might serve as one potential model.

9. Training

Throughout this report, we have pointed to the need for a variety of forms of training, for recreation practitioners as well as for social service practitioners. Training is needed in a variety of areas, such as in basic values and concepts (e.g. that persons with disabilities are people first and have abilities irrespective of any impairment, the meaning of leisure and the importance of community integration) as well as in specific approaches and techniques (e.g. how to do effective outreach, how to provide support).

In many cases existing training venues can be used, while it also may be appropriate to create new training vehicles. A long-term plan for training should be created, identifying training needs and priorities and means of delivery.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This report has pointed out the importance of leisure to community integration for persons with disabilities, and has set out a vision for the future.

Our vision of leisure for persons with disabilities is really very simple: it should be on the same basis as for anyone else in the community, in the same settings. Central to this vision is that the mainstream recreation community - represented in particular by the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation and municipal recreation - accept responsibility for including persons with disabilities within their regular recreation plans and programs.

Also central to the vision is a recognition that many persons with disabilities require support of some form in order to participate in leisure in community settings. The nature and degree of support will vary in type and degree from person to person. The Ministry of Community and Social Services should have primary responsibility for the provision of support services to permit independent community living.

This study has identified many barriers to leisure participation of persons with disabilities. At present, few community recreation programs are open at all to persons with disabilities; those which are available tend to be segregated programs.

Yet there are indications that the tide may be turning. There is increasing recognition, among consumers, the general public and recreationists, of the right of all persons, including persons with disabilities, to be part of the community. An increasing number of recreation organizations are starting to acknowledge their responsibility and are beginning to include persons with disabilities within their programs.

Thus the time is opportune for more concerted action to make recreation integration - and the full participation of all persons with disabilities in the regular leisure life of the community - a reality.

APPENDICES

1. People Interviewed

2. Bibliography

3. Facilitating Use of Community Leisure

4. Thunder Bay Parks and Recreation Integration Services

APPENDIX 1

PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

Francine Arsenault	PUSH
Bill Ballantyne	People First of Ontario
Laurie Bell	Toronto Citizen Advocacy
Jon Boynton	Office for Disabled Persons
Al Brickin	HAGI
Maureen Brophy	Thunder Bay Parks and Recreation
Sandra Carpenter	Handicapped Employment Program, Ministry of Labour
Doug Cartan	Executive Director, Brockville Association for Community Living
Barbara Claiman	Program Director, Reena Foundation
Janet Clees	Reena Foundation
Lorne Daley	Human Resources, National Capital Commission, Ottawa
Tony DiRe	Development Coordinator, West Island Readaptation Centre, Montreal
Archie Dowker	Executive Director, South East Grey Association for Support Services
Deborah Gold	Consultant, Recreation and Leisure, The G. Allan Roeher Institute
Herb Gray	Recreation Consultant for Persons With Disabilities, Ministry of Tourism and Recreation
Charlene Hearst	York Parks and Recreation
Betsy Heately	Manager, Fitness Section, Sports and Fitness Branch, Ministry of Tourism and Recreation
Audrey King	Hugh MacMillan Centre
Gordon Kyle	Employment Consultant, Ontario Association for Community Living

Sue Lantz	Physical Disabilities Policy Unit, Services for the Disabled Persons Branch, Ministry of Community and Social Services
Jim MacLaren	Status of Disabled Persons Secretariat, Department of the Secretary of State
Allan McWhorter	Executive Director, Kingston Association for Community Living
Lindsay Morgan	North York Parks and Recreation
Joanne Nugent	Director of Support Services, Mississauga Community Living
Peter Park	People First of Ontario
Barbara Robertson	Office for Disabled Persons
Rae Roebuck	Planning and Program Design Unit, Services for the Disabled Persons Branch, Ministry of Community and Social Services
Kirby Rowe	Executive Director, Canadian Paraplegic Association, Ontario
Trish Salisbury	Surrey Parks and Recreation, Surrey, B.C.
Dick Santos	BOOST
Robert E. Secord	Assistant Deputy Minister, Recreation Division, Ministry of Tourism and Recreation
Sharon Sinclair	Bradford Parks and Recreation
Cathy Smart	Program Coordinator (Geneva Park Vacations), March of Dimes
Barbara Stanton	Developmental Consulting Program, Queen's University
Bill Tager	Superintendent of Special Education, Metro Separate School Board
Jim Triantafilou	Residential Director, Mississauga Community Living
Frank Wagner	Manager, Physical Disabilities Policy Unit, Services for the Disabled Persons Branch, Ministry of Community and Social Services
Vic Willie	Centre for Independent Living Toronto
Patrick Worth	People First of Ontario

APPENDIX 2

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APPENDIX 3

FACILITATING USE OF COMMUNITY LEISURE

Following are brief summaries of the approaches used by two agencies serving persons with mental handicaps to assist their adult clients in using community leisure services.

Mississauga Community Living

Mississauga Community Living has established a Leisure Services Department, with a Coordinator and three staff. The primary purpose of the program is to assist its developmentally handicapped adult clients make use of community resources for their leisure. Components of the approach used by the program include:

- Structured Leisure: Association staff work together with regular community recreation agencies. Staff focus their activities on assisting and enabling community agencies to provide the support and resources so that individuals can participate in regular activities and programs.

- Non-structured Leisure: Staff assist individuals with non-structured leisure activities by helping them discover their interests, and assisting them in building their own community networks. As well, the department provides a vacation service (Vacations Unlimited) to assist adults with planning and participating in vacations, e.g., trips to Mexico, Niagara Falls. The focus of the program is to assist persons in being aware of options and making their own choices.

- Networks: Staff are out in the neighbourhood getting to know what and who is available to provide leisure and recreational opportunities. Networks are built by finding like-interested persons and facilitating links with agency clients.

- Individual focus: Either the family or the individual him/herself identifies the desired leisure activity and agency staff locate an appropriate opportunity in the community. The agency provides the supports, i.e., linking the individual to the program and providing transportation and volunteer or staff accompaniment when needed.

- Family Focus: Staff work with families of clients in order to alleviate their concerns about integration, e.g., that a volunteer can be a friend or potential friend when the association is based on mutual interests rather than on an assigned, more formal arrangement.

- Socializing: The agency assists People First through supports that include representation on the Board of Directors, secretarial support, and use of office space. The group provides opportunities for socializing.

- Follow-up: Agency staff monitors how things are going, and provide assistance if required.

West Island Readaptation Centre

The major purpose of the West Island Readaptation Centre of Montreal is to provide a variety of work opportunities for its clients with mental handicaps.

Its approach to integration is to start with the individual's needs and aspirations. The program tries to give people the opportunity to be involved with a variety of different experiences. It feels that change is difficult and that its approach helps people to learn to experience making changes.

For example, in its employment programs, an individual may be rotated through a number of different work settings, in order to obtain exposure to different types of jobs and to discover likes and dislikes firsthand. The work stations particularly lend themselves to this approach. In addition, the program offers: job placements with competitive and subsidized pay, work experience placements with no pay, individual support employment, referrals to other community employment programs, and sheltered workshop programs. The program is using as many community placements as possible.

While the primary purpose of the program is on employment, it recognizes that effective use of one's leisure time is also critical to community integration. Thus it also assists persons in obtaining exposure to a variety of leisure settings, so that they can be in a position to make informed choices about what they would like to do. A person may engage in a variety of different types of activities at the same time, for example combining part-time work at a work station with volunteer work and adult education. Exposure to leisure opportunities is provided through means such as:

- Adult Education: A meeting with the Community College is held annually to identify options for involving clients of West Island in College programs, including academic, employment, and recreation programs. Throughout the year, West Island matches individuals to options which match their interests with teachers providing links and buddies for supports, including matching students with professionals in their field. Teacher Assistants facilitate community integration with individuals on a one-to-one basis.

- Community Recreation: Staff of West Island help identify needs of individuals to appropriate community service providers. West Island makes the link between client and resource. One of it's most successful options is integrating adults through leisure programs provided by the Adult Education program of the Community College.

- Community Involvement: Exposure to routine community experiences is provided by agency staff to participants in employment programs. The routines may include shopping, using public transportation, restaurants, etc. in the community.

- Volunteer Work: Individuals may be placed in positions where they can do volunteer work in regular community settings.

APPENDIX 4

THUNDER BAY PARKS AND RECREATION INTEGRATION SERVICES

INTEGRATION SERVICES

1) Barrier Breakers
2) Training
3) Parks and Recreation Programme Supports
4) Accessibility Policies
5) Information Gathering - promotion and awareness
6) Resource to Staff and Community
7) Work with Community Agencies
8) Community Programme Involvement

Barrier Breakers is the new recreation plan and support programme which is offered through Parks and Recreation to adults with a disability. This programme replaces the former Harmony Place and On The Move which offered segregated, in-house programmes to adults with disabilities.

Our staff is currently introducing participants in the programme to community-based recreation. We do this by determining with each individual the supports required to participate in the recreational activities of his/her choice. These supports might include transportation, subsidization and physical assistance.

A telephone call is all it takes to set up an interview with the Integration Programmer and one of three Recreation Workers. The information obtained during this interview is taken back to the rest of the staff who meet regularly.

If staff is uncertain as to whether they can provide the necessary supports, or the needs of the future participant have not been sufficiently identified, we will ask that the participant attend a number of in-house sessions where staff can more clearly define what supports might be necessary.

We then arrange a meeting of the future participant, a family member or social worker and our staff and draw up what we call a recreation plan. This is a series of activities based on the five hours per week our staff is currently able to offer individual participants.

Dates, times, cost, transportation arrangements, telephone numbers and the name of the recreation worker who is to accompany the participant are all included in the recreation plan which has a calendar format.

Our recreation plans have included such things as kayaking, swimming, bowling, Summer In The Paks, Welcome Ship and Old Fort William tours, movies, horseback riding and a variety of low or no-cost activities, some as simple as a walk through a neighbourhood park.

Our dream is increased recreational independence for persons with a disability and a barrier-free community.

To access our service or to simply find out more about Barrier Breakers, call 625-2930 or 625-3220.